

# MONO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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## MINUTES

July 12, 2007

(Adopted August 9, 2007)

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**Commissioners present:** Ron Black, Scott Bush, Sally Miller, Paul Rowan, Steve Shipley.

**Staff present:** Scott Burns, director; Keith Hartstrom, principal planner; Greg Newbry, senior planner; Evan Nikirk & Walt Lehmann, public works; Stacey Simon, assistant county counsel; C.D. Ritter, commission secretary.

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1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Sally Miller called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ron Black announced his retirement from commission and introduced Danny Roberts as the proposed new commissioner.
3. **MEETING MINUTES:** Review and adopt minutes of:
  - 1) June 14, 2007, (Bush/Black: Ayes: 4-0. Abstain due to absence: Rowan.), and
  - 2) May 10, 2007: Commissioners Bush, Rowan & Shipley must be present. (Bush/Shipley. Ayes: 3-0. Abstain due to absence: Black & Miller.)

4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**SECOND MAP EXTENSION OF TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 37-177/Alpine Pacific.** The proposed project would divide 80.4 acres (APN 24-280-01) into four parcels of 13.3, 13.4, 21.8 and 21.9 acres plus an 8.0-acre remainder. The property is located near the northwest corner of the intersection of highways S.R. 120 and U.S. 6 in the community of Benton. The General Plan designation is Rural Residential with a four-acre minimum lot size (RR 4). *Staff: Gwen Plummer*

Keith Hartstrom outlined the project. Need extension to be in compliance with conditions.

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING.** Craig Tapley, managing partner, indicated that processing the map is taking a lot longer than he'd thought. He had a parallel application going to 18 lots, but fees and studies cost too much. He requested the longest possible extension. Two-year life is the maximum.

**CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING.**

**MOTION:** Approve Second Map Extension of Tentative Parcel Map 37-177 as presented. (Shipley/Bush. Ayes: 5-0.)

5. **ACTION ITEM:**

**FINAL APPROVAL OF PARCEL MAP 35-33/Baysore.** Parcel Map 35-33 will divide APN 24-040-01, totaling about 279 acres, into three lots of 2.5 acres each, one lot of 10 acres, and a remainder of about 259 acres. The property is located approximately five miles northeast of Benton, three miles north of S.R. 120, and 1.5 miles west of U.S. 6. Access to the property is off Foothill Road, and G-Bar T Road, both County-maintained dirt roads. The General Plan designation is Agriculture with a 2.5-acre minimum lot size (AG 2.5). The tentative parcel map was approved at a public hearing conducted by the Planning Commission on Aug. 11, 2005. *Staff: Evan Nikirk*

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DISTRICT #1  
COMMISSIONER  
Paul Rowan

DISTRICT #2  
COMMISSIONER  
Steve Shipley

DISTRICT #3  
COMMISSIONER  
Ron Black

DISTRICT #4  
COMMISSIONER  
Scott Bush

DISTRICT #5  
COMMISSIONER  
Sally Miller

Evan Nikirk outlined the project. Currently under way are construction of improvements, access road, and drainage. A perimeter fence does not coincide with property lines so must be relocated.

**MOTION:** Authorize chair's signature on Parcel Map 35-33, indicating its approval. (Shipley/Bush. Ayes: 5-0.)

**6. WORKSHOP: DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS: "Parking, Streets and Limited Impact Development."**

*Staff: Greg Newbry*

Cargo containers: Resolution 85-06, which defined cargo containers, was not approved by the Mono Supervisors and has limited authority. Cargo containers must be located and modified visually by roofing and siding to resemble a normal wood-framed building. Currently no building permit is required. Anything approved for one would have to apply to all. A cargo container should fit with the surroundings and promote the visual characteristics of the area where we live.

Commissioner Shipley noted that the appeal of cargo containers is that they are cheap and weatherproof. Mono could require paint that blends with surroundings. The applicant needs to meet Universal Building Code requirements, so Building Division should be involved.

Commissioner Miller agreed with siding, but did not support "ridiculous requirements." Staff will look into snowload requirements.

Parking: Some areas are concentrated and do not need as many parking spaces. Parking is too restrictive in June Lake, Lee Vining and Bridgeport. Parking lot design at Minaret Village Mall in Mammoth Lakes is backward, with a sea of asphalt in front of businesses. Benton wants paving required for subdivisions with more than four lots.

**7. REPORTS:**

**A. DIRECTOR:** 1) Defensible space: In a revamping of fire zones, Mono County is being downgraded to "moderate. A strong fire season has changed 30' to 100', triggering grading permit requirements. A conflict in regulations exists. The Mono Supervisors suggested exempting defensible space from a grading permit. Stacey Simon indicated that creating defensible space does not mean clear the lot, scrape it clean; it means trimming, clearing leaf litter, etc. Mono seems to think it means grading, which creates conflict with the environment, aesthetics, etc. People think they should not have to pay a fee for doing a good thing. An ordinance could exempt from a grading permit 100' in north county, 30' in south county. Putting a 100' circle around structures will change the environmental process, and CEQA analysis needs to support it.

Commissioner Shipley mentioned the extremely dense, flammable vegetation in Swall Meadows. The area needs selective thinning, keeping bitterbrush plants (people who removed bitterbrush can't get it back), and removing dead vegetation.

Commissioner Miller asked who's responsible for defensible space on big projects -- developer or individual homeowners. Burns indicated the General Plan policy requires a "will-serve" letter from one of 10 FPDs. Most unincorporated areas, however, are outside fire districts, so there's a need to figure out fire protection plans and establish fire standards. Most FPDs are comprised of volunteers.

Commissioner Shipley indicated that fire chiefs will not support lot splits or building until fire reduction occurs. There are areas the FPD can't protect. The chiefs could throw a roadblock by using their authority to deny will-serve letters. How can Mono interact with local areas to help with fire suppression? There's a need to get funding.

Commissioner Black mentioned a halt to canopy thinning in June Lake due to osprey nesting.

2) Tri-Valley: Visioning meetings have been held in Chalfant and Benton. Newbry indicated the study has revealed small-rural thought process. Residents like how it is and think it has to stay like that. Caltrans is now considering communities, not just getting trucks from point A to point B. Chalfant was a bit difficult, but Benton people talked freely about arterial streets, access, routes for getting around. They suggested recommendations on parcel size, streets, commercial areas, and school. Benton has unusual characteristics at the highway crossroads of S.R. 120 and U.S. 6.

Commissioner Bush noted that each community is different, and people go where it's how they want it. That's why people live where they live.

Commissioner Shipley noted that the medians in Crowley Lake need maintenance. Could a community take over maintenance? Evan Nikirk indicated an MOU with LADPW outlines who's responsible for what. Could a CSD get involved in upgrades? Mono has to spread money across the board with limited resources, so could a community take it to the next level without legal ramifications? Address legal issues in the MOU and circumvent endless RPAC discussion. Library landscaping has been left undone for three years. People got angry or don't participate anymore. Burns indicated that LAFCO policy says a special district could do that.

Commissioner Miller noted the problem in Tri-Valley is water. Greg Newbry predicted another \$5 million to \$6 million would be needed to determine how water works there. Burns indicated Tri-Valley Groundwater District has debated whether to do a water study. It is authorized to ration all water users as a drastic step. New projects are required to have thorough water studies with peer review. What's the threshold for needing a water study? Newbry noted that people can always throw in water as an obstacle.

Commissioner Shipley thought Mono needs the ability as a county to control water usage. Mountain Meadows is rationing water now because it has to. Commissioner Miller recalled that U.S. Filter tried to get water from Benton, but found insufficient water.

3) Rodeo Grounds: Burns indicated a serious application has been submitted for a General Plan Amendment to exceed height requirements. Intrawest has gotten bids and is in contact with consultants. Darin Dinsmore will review the project for design guidelines. Another scoping meeting will be held, design done concurrent with the EIR, and the process should be complete within a year.

**8. INFORMATION:** No items.

**9. ADJOURN:** 11:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
C.D. Ritter, commission secretary